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**HB-5120: AN ACT CONCERNING PRIVATE AND MUNICIPAL RECYCLING,
ZONING ORDINANCES AND SOLID WASTE COLLECTION CONTRACTS**
March 1, 2010

Chairman Roy, Chairman Meyers, and esteemed members of the Committee, thank you for the opportunity to testify on behalf of HB 5120. and thank you for raising it as a committee bill.

You may recall this bill from last year. It passed this committee 28-2. We then worked with the folks who voted no here last year to make it acceptable to them before it went to the House, where it passed with bipartisan support 141-4. Unfortunately, it was never called in the Senate and died on the calendar.

Europeans recycle 60% of their waste stream, while we only recycle 30%. Why? Public education and expectations, as well as infrastructure. Walk down a European street or even a Colorado street and you'll see not only trash bins, but recycling bins. We tell people to recycle, but there are no recycle bins in most public spaces. So people throw bottles, cans, paper, and everything else into the trash, or worse, on the ground. You need only look around the LOB and into the trash bins here to see that this is true.

The current law says we have to recycle. But, currently, in some towns, residents have to pay extra for recycling. Or they're given a tiny receptacle for recycling and a huge one for trash. So they just throw everything in the trash and pay less for violating the law. In most public spaces, there are trash barrels but no places to dispose of recyclable materials. Obviously the incentive is to not recycle, since we make it both inconvenient and more expensive to obey the existing law.

And how many of you have discovered that after years of carefully separating your office paper from the trash, that when you stay late at night you see the cleaning company dump

your trash and your recyclable paper all into the same bin? I have and it's very discouraging.

We must do better. And we can do better! And it isn't complicated....it's pretty basic.

This bill is focused on making it convenient to recycle and incentivizing people to recycle. The goal is to reduce CT's solid waste and increase our recycling rates.

This bill makes a rational start by including a set of actions that most everyone can support. Reps Bye, Camillo, and Johnson and I have worked collaboratively with a variety of stakeholders in crafting the bill, including DEP, bottlers, trash haulers, the business community, environmental advocates, grocers, CRRA, CCM, and others. And we have tried to craft bill language that addresses everyone's concerns while still moving the ball forward.

Key components of this year's bill include:

- A reduction in the data reporting burden for those towns where trash removal is handled through subscription, rather than by the town itself.
- The addition of plastics 1&2, as well as boxboard, to the list of things to be recycled. (92% of towns already recycle magazines and other paper, 88% recycle plastics 1&2. Only 29 towns do not already recycle boxboard.) By getting residents to recycle these additional items, the towns will actually save money on tipping fees, by moving weight from the trash truck to the recycling truck.
- The enforcement of existing recycling laws on office cleaning companies, with appropriate fines for non-compliance.
- Prohibits towns from having a zoning ordinance that conflicts with recycling efforts, as sometimes happens as a result of old zoning rules regarding the footprint allowed for businesses to store trash on their property until pick up time.
- A requirement for towns and trash haulers to offer curbside pickup of recycling if they provide curbside pick-up of trash. Further, this bill would prohibit trash haulers from charging more to residents or businesses who elect curbside recycling.
- A requirement that will make recycling more convenient in public places, by assuring that there will be recycling bins wherever there are trash bins in public venues where trash is generated.
- A requirement for commercial waste removal contracts to specify with the next contract renewal or within 2 years, whichever comes first, how recyclables will be collected, in addition to solid waste. By explicitly establishing a plan with each business for removal of recyclables, it will be less tempting for businesses to just throw materials into the trash bin.

CT boasts many beautiful landscapes. Being an avid outdoors-person myself, preserving our natural beauty is a priority for me. For me it is a tragedy to look on the side of our roadways and hiking trails and see litter, whether it's a soda can or a fast food wrapper.

It's an equal tragedy to see us waste energy and natural resources by throwing away recyclable goods, at a time when electricity prices, petroleum prices, and de-forestation are issues driving global conflicts.

